

Charter Commission Minutes

Charter Commission Meeting of July 5, 2017, 5:30 pm, Police Station Community Room

Members Present: Andy Churchill, Mandi Jo Hanneke, Nick Grabbe, Diana Stein, Meg Gage, Irv Rhodes, Gerry Weiss

Members Absent: Julia Rueschemeyer, Tom Fricke

Collins Center: Michael Ward

Agenda:

1. Call to order, approve agenda, approve minutes (5 minutes)
2. Public comment (15 minutes)
3. Review and edit master draft language (all articles) (3 hours, 10 minutes)
4. Topics not reasonably anticipated by the Chair 48 hours prior to the meeting
5. Planning: future meetings, public feedback (30 minutes)
6. Adjourn

Call to Order around 5:30 pm

1. No minutes to approve
2. No public Comment
3. The Commission began with Article 8 (Relief Mechanisms) from the June 26th draft Charter.

Discussed scope of Open Meeting—which elected bodies should it apply to? Agreed to add School Committee and Library Trustees to the provision, and the allow residents 18 and older (not just voters) to request the meeting.

Most of the rest of the discussion on Article 8 revolved around the required number of signatures for petition, initiative and veto procedures.

For an Open Meeting of the Town Council, School Committee, or Board of Library Trustees, 100 signatures confirmed by the President or Chair of that entity is required.

For all below, signatures required and obtained will have to be certified by the Town Clerk.

For Free Petition, increased the number of signatures required for a group petition to 150. Deleted Library Trustees and School Committee from all portions of Resident Relief Mechanisms except Open Meetings and Individual Free Petitions (where no action is required).

For Initiative measures, increased the number of signatures to 150 before the measures get sent to the Town Attorney for determination of legality. Ward provided comparable numbers from other towns to aid in the discussion. Removed the requirement for additional signatures after the Town Attorney returns it and before it gets acted upon by Town Council.

For Section 8-4, Veto Procedures, decreased the number of days to file to 14 (and therefore decreased the number of days before a bylaw is effective to 14).

In both sections 8-3 and 8-4, added a required a minimum turnout of 20% of registered voters to vote in order for the measure to be effective (8-3) or vetoed (8-4). Also added language requiring the same quantum for passage by the voters as required for passage by Town Council.

In Article 9, General Provisions, added additional language to the Master Plan section.

All other changes discussed and agreed upon are reflected in the July 7th Draft of the Charter.

4. Preliminary Report Review

The Commission reviewed Fricke's draft of a preliminary report. Discussion occurred on the format and content. Weiss asked that all opinions and reasons for changes be removed and that the report remain as neutral and factual as possible. Commission agreed to do so. Discussion on whether to change the look of it and whether to add language from the handouts from the most recent feedback sessions. Grabbe agreed to modify the language to include both Fricke's draft and the language from the feedback session handouts. Churchill agreed to draft an introductory letter to accompany charter summary.

5. Commission agreed to plan on using all three meetings scheduled the next week (July 10, 12 and 13). Vote on the charter and to send it to the AG and DHCD would occur on the 13th. Collins Center will get a new draft by the 7th so that the Commissioners have time to review it over the weekend.

Meeting adjourned around 9:30pm.

Submitted by Mandi Jo Hanneke